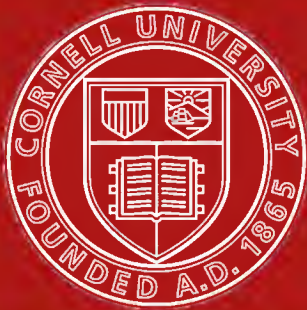


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PAPERS RELATING TO MARITIME DANGER  
ZONES AND THE PLACING BY BELLIGERENTS  
OF MINES IN THE HIGH SEAS.

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The Secretary of State to Ambassador Gerard, February 10, 1915, page 54.

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File No. 763.72/257.

*Ambassador Gerard to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram—Paraphrase.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*Berlin, August 7, 1914.*

Mr. Gerard reports that he is informed by the German Foreign Office that German ports are strewn with mines and it is requested that timely warning be given shippers against navigating in ports which foreign forces might use as bases.

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File No. 763.72/566.

*Memorandum from the British Embassy.*

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires presents his compliments to the Secretary of State and has the honour to communicate to him the following telegram which he received last night from the Foreign Office:

"The Germans are scattering contact mines indiscriminately about the North Sea in the open sea without regard to the consequences to merchantmen. Two days ago four large merchant ships were observed to pass within a mile of the minefield which sank H. M. S. *Amphion*. The waters of the North Sea must therefore be regarded as perilous in the last degree to merchant shipping of all nations. In view of the methods adopted by Germany the British Admiralty must hold themselves fully at liberty to adopt similar measures in self defence which must inevitably increase the dangers to navigation in the North Sea. But, before doing so, they think it right to issue this warning in order that merchant ships under neutral flags trading with North Sea ports should be turned back before entering the area of such exceptional danger.

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
*Washington, August 11, 1914.*

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File No. 763.72/566.

*Memorandum to the British Embassy.*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires and acknowledges the receipt of his Memorandum of August 11, 1914, communicating a telegram received by him from the Foreign Office stating that the Germans are scattering contact mines indiscriminately in the open waters of the North Sea without regard to the consequences to merchantmen, thus rendering these waters perilous to the shipping of all nations, and that in view of the methods adopted by Germany the British Admiralty hold themselves at liberty to adopt similar measures in self defense, thus increasing the dangers to navigation in the North Sea.

It is not stated in the Memorandum whether the contact mines are floating or anchored; but it is presumed from the expression "scattering contact mines indis-



criminally" that it was the intention to convey the idea that the mines referred to are floating mines.

The limitation placed upon the use of floating contact mines by Article 1 of The Hague Convention of 1907 relative to the Laying of Automatic Submarine Contact Mines is that they shall become harmless within one hour after being laid.

The Secretary of State is loath to believe that a signatory to that Convention would wilfully disregard its treaty obligation, which was manifestly made in the interest of neutral shipping.

All restrictions upon the rights of neutrals upon the high seas, the common highway of nations, during the progress of a war, are permitted in the interests of the belligerents, who are bound in return to prevent their hostile operations from increasing the hazard of neutral ships in the open sea so far as the exigencies of the war permit.

If an enemy of His Majesty's Government has, as asserted, endangered neutral commerce by an act in violation of The Hague Convention, which cannot be justified on the ground of military necessity, the Secretary of State perceives no reason for His Majesty's Government adopting a similar course, which would add further dangers to the peaceful navigation of the high seas by vessels of neutral powers.

The Secretary of State, therefore, expresses the earnest and confident hope that His Majesty's Government may not feel compelled to resort, as a defensive measure, to a method of naval warfare, which would appear to be contrary to the terms of The Hague Convention and impose upon the ships and lives of neutrals a needless menace when peaceably navigating the high seas.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
*Washington, August 13, 1914.*

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File No. 763.72/419.

*Memorandum from the British Embassy.*

The British Embassy presents its compliments to the Department of State and with reference to its memorandum of August 11 on the subject of contact mines in the North Sea has the honour to communicate the following telegram received from His Majesty's Government.

"German action and the measures it may entail are a source of grave danger to shipping. British Admiralty will however from time to time and subject to naval exigencies try to indicate certain routes and channels for trade to pass to the Scheldt and they do not wish in any degree to keep trade away from the English Channel.

"Difficulties in the way of a guarantee for the Rhine which is nearer to the centre of war are at present insuperable."

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
*Washington, August 14, 1914.*

*Memorandum from the British Embassy.*

His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires presents his compliments to the United States Secretary of State and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of his memorandum of August 13 in which, with reference to the action of Germany in placing contact mines in the North Sea and the right reserved by His Majesty's Government to take similar measures in self-defence, the Secretary of State expresses the hope that His Majesty's Government may not feel compelled to resort to a method of warfare which would appear to be contrary to the terms of the Hague Convention of 1907 and impose upon the ships and lives of neutrals a needless menace when peaceably navigating the high seas.

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires lost no time in fully informing His Majesty's Government of the views which the Secretary of State was good enough to express in the memorandum under reply and he now begs to communicate a further expression of Sir Edward Grey's views as received by telegraph.

It is stated that there is no doubt whatever that automatic contact mines have been placed by Germany in the high seas where they are dangerous to merchant shipping, as a German mine-laying vessel was caught in the act. It is not alleged that they are a breach of any Convention concluded at The Hague to which Germany is a party but that does not make them less dangerous to merchant shipping.

His Majesty's Government share the reluctance of the Secretary of State to see the practice extended and the danger to neutral shipping increased. At the same time His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires is instructed to point out that if Great Britain refrains from adopting the methods of Germany the result is that Germany receives impunity unless the neutral Powers can find some means of making Germany feel that she cannot continue to preserve all facilities for receiving trade and supplies through neutral shipping while impeding British commerce by means, the use of which by Great Britain is deprecated by the United States Government.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

*Washington, August 19, 1914.*

*Memorandum from the British Embassy.*

The British Ambassador presents his compliments to the Secretary of State and has the honour to communicate the text of a telegram received today from Sir E. Grey:

"His Majesty's Government have learnt that on or about August 26th an Iceland trawler is reported to have struck a mine 25 miles off the Tyne and sunk, and at least one foreign newspaper has stated that the mine was English. Although the German action in laying mines has forced the Admiralty to reserve to themselves the right to do likewise, the statement already made by His Majesty's Government that no British mines have

been laid remains absolutely true at this moment. The mines off the Tyne were laid thirty miles to seaward, not as part of any definite military operation nor by German ships of war but by German trawlers of which a considerable number appear to have been engaged on this work; the number of one such trawler actually seen to be doing this was A. E. 24 Emden. It would be well if the conduct of those who ordered her to perform this act were carefully considered by neutral powers."

BRITISH EMBASSY,

Washington, August <sup>30</sup>~~24~~, 1914.

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File No. 763.72/640.

*Memorandum from the British Embassy.*

His Majesty's Ambassador presents his compliments to the Secretary of State and has the honour to communicate to him the following telegram received from the Foreign Office yesterday summarizing the Naval position of the war up to date:

"The Admiralty wish to draw attention to their previous warning to neutrals of the danger of traversing the North Sea. The Germans are continuing their practice of laying mines indiscriminately upon the ordinary trade routes. These mines do not conform to the conditions of the Hague convention; they do not become harmless after a certain number of hours; they are not laid in connection with any definite military scheme such as the closing of a military port or as a distinct operation against a fighting fleet, but appear to be scattered on the chance of catching individual British war or merchant vessels. In consequence of this policy neutral ships, no matter what their destination, are exposed to the gravest dangers. Two Danish vessels the S. S. *Maryland* and the S. S. *Broberg* have within the last 24 hours been destroyed by these deadly engines in the North Sea while travelling on the ordinary trade routes at a considerable distance from the British Coast. In addition to this, it is reported that two Dutch steamers clearing from Swedish ports were yesterday blown up by German mines in the Baltic. In these circumstances the Admiralty desire to impress not only on British but on neutral shipping the vital importance of touching at British ports before entering the North Sea in order to ascertain according to the latest information the routes and channels which the Admiralty are keeping swept and along which these dangers to neutrals and merchant men are reduced as far as possible. The Admiralty, while reserving to themselves the utmost liberty of retaliatory action against this new form of warfare, announce that they have not so far laid any mines during the present war and that they are endeavouring to keep the sea routes open for peaceful commerce."

BRITISH EMBASSY,

Washington, August 23, 1914.

File No. 763.72/853.

*The German Ambassador to the Secretary of State.*

[Translation.]

GERMAN EMBASSY,  
*New York, September 10, 1914.*

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By direction of my Government I have the honor respectfully to bring the following to Your Excellency's knowledge.

No foundation for idea prevalent among neutrals abroad that because of the blockade of German ports sea trade with Germany is tied up. No port is blockaded and nothing stands in the way of neutral states' sea trade with Germany.

The assertions from England that the North Sea has been infested with mines by Germany are wrong.

Neutral vessels bound for German ports in the North Sea must steer by day for a point 10 nautical miles N. W. off Helgoland. There will German pilots be found in readiness to pilot the ships into port.

Neutral vessels must sail direct for Baltic sea ports, every one of which has pilots.

The prohibition of coal export does not include bunker coal and coaling is assured.

Accept, etc.,

J. BERNSTORFF.

File No. 763.72/1075.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

No. 476.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY  
*London, September 28, 1914.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a protest made by the British Government against the methods pursued by the Germany Navy in laying mines in the North Sea.

This protest was enclosed to me by his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a communication requesting that it be forwarded to the Government of the United States.

I have, etc.,

WALTER HINES PAGE

[Inclosure.]

His Majesty's Government consider it their duty to bring before the notice of the United States Government the practice which is being pursued by the German naval authorities in laying mines on the high seas on the trade routes, not only to British but to neutral ports, and in furtherance of no definite military operation. His Majesty's Government have reason to think that fishing vessels, possibly disguised as neutral, are employed for the purpose, and lay these mines under the pretense of following the ordinary avocations of fishing. Mines have been found in several cases as much as 50 miles from the coast.



This practice has already resulted, since the commencement of the war, in the destruction of eight neutral and seven British merchant and fishing vessels, so far as at present ascertained, with the loss of some sixty lives of neutral and noncombatant persons.

The practice of laying mines indiscriminately and in large numbers on the high seas, entirely regardless of the dangers to peaceful shipping, is in flagrant violation of the accepted principles of international law and contrary to the primary dictates of humanity. It is also in direct contradiction with the language of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who, as First German delegate at the Peace Conference of 1907, spoke as follows: "We do not intend, if I may employ an expression used by the British delegate, 'to sow mines in profusion on every sea.' \* \* \* We do not hold the opinion that everything which is not expressly forbidden is permitted."

The freedom of the seas for peaceful trading is an established and universally accepted principle; this fact has never been more clearly recognized than in the words of the report of the third Committee of the Second Peace Conference, which dealt with the question of submarine contact mines: "Even apart from any written stipulation it can never fail to be present in the minds of all that the principle of the liberty of the seas, with the obligations which it implies on behalf of those who make use of this way of communication open to the nations, is the indisputable prerogative of the human race."

This principle received further recognition in the 3rd article of the Convention relating to the laying of submarine contact mines:—

"When anchored automatic contact mines are employed, every possible precaution must be taken for the security of peaceful shipping.

"The belligerents undertake to do their utmost to render these mines harmless after a limited time has elapsed, and, should the mines cease to be under observation, to notify the danger zones as soon as military exigencies permit, by a notice to mariners, which must also be communicated to the Governments through the diplomatic channel."

Not only have the German Government neglected to take every possible precaution for the safety of neutral shipping, but they have, on the contrary, deliberately and successfully contrived to sow danger in its track. The mined zones have not been kept under observation nor has any notification of their locality ever been made. The provisions of this article, which the German Government are pledged to observe have therefore been violated in three distinct ways.

Article 1, Section 2, of the same Convention has equally been violated by the German Government, for the mines which they have laid have in numerous instances been found adrift from their moorings without having become harmless. Yet the German Government made no reservation respecting this article either when signing or ratifying the Convention.

The degree of respect with which the German Government treat their written pledges, and the pledges given

verbally in their name by their representatives, is sufficiently apparent from what is stated above. It is brought into yet higher relief in the light of the following statement made by Baron Marschall before the third Committee of the last Peace Conference, and repeated by him in full, and with added emphasis, at the 8th plenary meeting of the Conference:—

“A belligerent who lays mines assumes a very heavy responsibility toward neutrals and peaceful shipping. \* \* \* No one will resort to such means unless for military reasons of an absolutely urgent character. But military acts are not governed solely by principles of international law. There are other factors: conscience, good sense, and the sentiment of duty imposed by principles of humanity will be the surest guides for the conduct of sailors, and will constitute the most effective guarantee against abuses. The officers of the German Navy, I emphatically affirm, will always fulfil, in the strictest fashion, the duties which emanate from the unwritten law of humanity and civilisation.”

His Majesty's Government desire to place on record their strong protest against the illegitimate means of conducting warfare which has been resorted to by their adversaries. They feel that its manifest inhumanity must call down upon its authors the censure and reprobation of all civilised peoples.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 26, 1914.*

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File No. 763.72/1104.

*Memorandum from the British Embassy.*

TELEGRAM FROM SIR EDWARD GREY TO SIR CECIL SPRING RICE, OCTOBER 2, 1914.

The German policy of minelaying combined with their submarine activities makes it necessary on military grounds for Admiralty to adopt countermeasures. His Majesty's Government have therefore authorized a minelaying policy in certain areas and a system of minefields has been established and is being developed upon a considerable scale. In order to reduce risks to noncombatants the Admiralty announce that it is dangerous hence-forward for ships to cross area between Latitude fifty-one degrees fifteen minutes north and fifty-one degrees forty minutes north and Longitude one degree thirty-five minutes east and three degrees east. In this connection it must be remembered that the southern limit of the German minefield is latitude fifty-two degrees north. Although these limits are assigned to the danger area it must not be supposed that navigation is safe in any part of the southern waters of the North Sea. Instructions have been issued to His Majesty's ships to warn east going vessels of the presence of this new minefield. You should inform Government to which you are accredited without delay.

File No. 763.72/1107.

*Ambassador Herrick to the Secretary of State.*

No. 704.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*Paris, October 9th 1914.*

SIR: Confirming my telegram No. 184 of this date, relative to the placing of submarine mines in the Adriatic Sea, I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy and translation, together with its enclosure, of a note from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, giving the text of the advice inserted in the "Journal Officiel" in regard thereto.

I have, etc.,

MYRON T. HERRICK.

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[Inclosure—Translation.]

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
FRENCH REPUBLIC.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has the honor to transmit to His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States, the accompanying notification made in conformity with the stipulation of Article 3, Par. 2 of the 8th Convention of The Hague 1907 relative to the use of submarine mines.

BORDEAUX, *October 6th 1914.*

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[Sub-inclosure—Translation.]

NOTICE

Published in the "Journal Officiel" Official part.

Automatic mines having been sown in the Adriatic sea by the Austro-Hungarian navy, the French naval forces have been obliged to resort to similar measures in the said sea.

However, in order to avoid that inoffensive neutral ships should suffer harm such as has been unjustly caused by the Austro-Hungarian mines, the mines laid down by the French navy are in conformity with the provisions stipulated by the 8th Convention of the Hague, 1907.

The zone that is dangerous to navigation, comprises the territorial waters of the Austro-Hungarian kingdom and the channels between the islands along the coast of Dalmatia.

Notice is hereby given to all whom it may concern, in conformity with Article 3, Par. 2 of the aforesaid Convention.

Approved:

The Minister for Marine

(Signed)

VICTOR AUGAGNEUR

Attest:

The Vice-Admiral Chief of Staff

(Signed)

PIVET.

File No. 763.72/1141.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

*London, October 28, 1914.*

Referring to my 926,<sup>1</sup> October twenty-seventh. A German mine field has been discovered off the north coast of Ireland and the British Admiralty warns shipping not to pass within sixty miles of Tory Island. One British ship bound from Manchester to Montreal struck a mine there and went down. This mine field is in a location which suggests that it was meant rather for merchant than naval ships.

Part of channels of the Thames have been closed by Admiralty.

A Dutch ship struck a mine forty miles north of Ymuiden and sank.

The sinking of the passenger boat across the channel by a mine is disputed.

PAGE.

File No. 763.72/1161.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram—Paraphrase.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

*London, November 2, 1914.*

Mr. Page states that he is informed by Sir Edward Grey that the mine fields North of Ireland were laid by Germans from vessels flying neutral flags. The mines are directly in the path of some of the transatlantic vessels and the liner *Olympic* recently was dangerously near the mines. The danger from the mines is constantly spreading over a wider area.

File No. 763.72/1171.

*The British Ambassador to the Secretary of State.*

No. 375.]

BRITISH EMBASSY,

*Washington, November 3, 1914.*

SIR: In compliance with instructions received from Sir Edward Grey, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I have the honour to enclose herewith copy of a telegram which he has addressed to me recommending certain routes to be followed for ships wishing to trade to and from Norway, the Baltic, Denmark and Holland.

I have, etc.,

CECIL SPRING RICE.

[Inclosure.]

*November 3, 1914.*

Please inform Government to which you are accredited that the Admiralty are issuing the following announcement.

During the last week the Germans have scattered mines indiscriminately in the open sea on main trade

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.



route from America to Liverpool via North of Ireland. Peaceful merchant ships have already been blown up with loss of life by this agency. The White Star liner *Olympic* escaped disaster by pure good luck and but for warnings given by British cruisers other British and neutral merchant and passenger vessels would have been destroyed.

These mines cannot have been laid by any German ship of war. They have been laid by some merchant vessels flying neutral flag which have come along the trade route as if for purposes of peaceful commerce and while profiting to the full by immunity enjoyed by neutral merchant ships have wantonly and recklessly endangered the lives of all who travel on the sea regardless of whether they are friend or foe, civilian or military in character.

Minelaying under neutral flag and reconnaissance conducted by trawlers, hospital ships and neutral vessels are the ordinary features of German naval warfare.

In these circumstances having regard to the great interests entrusted to the British Navy, to the safety of peaceful commerce on high seas and to the maintenance within limits of international law of trade between neutral countries, the Admiralty feel it necessary to adopt exceptional measures appropriate to the novel conditions under which this war is being waged.

They therefore give notice that the whole of the North Sea must be considered a military area. Within this area merchant shipping of all kinds, traders of all countries, fishing craft and all other vessels will be exposed to the gravest dangers from mines which it has been necessary to lay and from warships searching vigilantly by night and day for suspicious craft.

All merchant and fishing vessels of every description are hereby warned of the dangers they encounter by entering this area except in strict accordance with Admiralty directions. Every effort will be made to convey this warning to neutral countries and to vessels on the sea, but from the 5th of November onwards the Admiralty announce that all ships passing a line drawn from the northern point of the Hebrides through Faroe Islands to Iceland do so at their own peril.

Ships of all countries wishing to trade to and from Norway, the Baltic, Denmark and Holland are advised to come, if inward bound, by the English channel and Straits of Dover. There they will be given sailing directions which will pass them safely so far as Great Britain is concerned up the East Coast of England to Farne Island, whence safe route will, if possible, be given to Lindesnaes Lightship. From this point they should turn North or South according to their destination, keeping as near the coast as possible. Converse applies to vessels outward bound.

By strict adherence to these routes the commerce of all countries will be able to reach its destination in safety so far as Great Britain is concerned, but any straying even for a few miles from the course thus indicated may be followed by serious consequences.

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
Washington.

File No. 763.72/1174.

*Ambassador Marye to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*Petrograd, November 5, 1914.*

Russian Government officially notifies Embassy that it has placed mines in zone from fifty-eight fifty north latitude and to east of twenty-first meridian also at entrance of Gulf of Riga and around Aland Islands and consequently entrance and exit of Finnish and Riga Gulfs forbidden.

MARYE.

File No. 763.72/1268.

*Ambassador Gerard to the Secretary of State.*

No. 261.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*Berlin, November 13, 1914.*

SIR: With reference to my cipher telegram No. 823, dated November 12, 1914,<sup>1</sup> I have the honor to transmit to you herewith a copy in translation of the reply of the German Government to the protest of the British Government against the laying of German mines.

I have, etc.,

JAMES W. GERARD.

[Inclosure-Translation.]

REPLY OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE PROTEST OF  
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE LAYING OF  
GERMAN MINES.

It has been brought to the knowledge of the German Government that the British Government addressed a Note to the neutral Powers under date September 20th, 1914 protesting against the laying of German mines. It is asserted in the protest that the mines were laid in a way contrary to international law and in forbidden localities; that they were not sufficiently anchored or under proper observance; and were not notified to the neutrals in accordance with rule. Furthermore attention is called to the declarations of the first German delegate at the Second Hague Peace Conference which are in contradiction with such practice and likewise to the deliberate injury to neutral trade which Germany's action on the open sea is alleged to involve.

The German Government makes the following reply to this protest:

I.

In condemning the alleged German practice the British Government relies on the 8th Hague Convention of October 18th, 1907, relative to the laying of automatic submarine contact mines. It overlooks the fact that under Article 7 of this Convention its provisions do not

<sup>1</sup> Not printed: gives purport of inclosure herewith.

apply unless all the belligerents are parties to the Convention. Now Russia, which is allied with England, has not ratified the Agreement; it is therefore not binding by international law on any of the participants in the present war.

Nevertheless the German Government has voluntarily held itself bound by its provisions, with the exception of Article 2, with regard to which France as well as Germany made express reservations. The assertion of the British Government that these provisions have been violated by Germany is emphatically denied.

## II.

To firstly the British Government finds it a breach of international law that the German mines were apparently laid by fishing vessels, possibly under neutral flag, under the pretence of following the ordinary peaceable avocations of fishing. This assertion is incorrect and an invention; the German mines were laid exclusively by German warships.

2. The British Government complains that German mines were laid as far as 50 miles from the British coast and not only on British but neutral trade routes. The Convention does not stipulate how far from the coast and ports of an enemy mines may be anchored, and there is no established practice in this respect in international law; moreover the English statement of the distance of the German mines from the menaced coast is much exaggerated. The mines have been laid as close as the conditions of the anchoring grounds and the character of the coast permitted. The assertion that neutral trade routes have been blocked is untrue; no German mines have been laid in any trade route from the high seas to a neutral port.

3. The British Protest maintains further that in numerous cases German mines were found adrift without having become harmless. The anchoring of mines by Germany has been carried out with all possible precaution. If some have drifted from their moorings in consequence of currents or storms their number is certainly much smaller than that of mines laid by England which have drifted ashore on the Belgian and Dutch coasts and have caused damage there through their undiminished explosive power.

4. The obligation of keeping mines under surveillance which the British Government complains has been violated can naturally be enjoined upon a belligerent only as long as he retains command over that part of the seat of war where he has laid mines in a manner permitted by international law. As a rule therefore this obligation will apply only to defensive mines but not to offensive mines. When a belligerent has properly laid offensive mines and has duly notified their laying he is relieved of all further responsibility.

5. In the British protest the charge is made that the German Government never issued any proclamation as to the places where mines were laid. This charge is not founded in fact. On August 7th, 1914 the German

Government communicated to all the neutral powers that the trade routes to English ports would be closed by mines by Germany. Neutral shipping was therefore notified of the fact of the laying of the mines and the zones where it had to look out for German mines. If the German Government did not give the exact situation of the various mines this may well be understood from the conditions which forced the laying of the mines.

### III.

The volume of strong words and moral indignation with which the British protest denounces the German Government to the neutral powers is not therefore justified at all by Germany's practice. This protest is plainly nothing but a cloak to cover up the serious violations of existing international law laid down in the Declaration of London indulged in by England and a pretext to prepare public opinion for the closing of the North Sea contrary to international law which has since taken place and is equivalent in its economic importance to a blockade of neutral coasts. In view of these facts it is doubly remarkable that the British Government constitutes itself the advocate of the "established and generally accepted principle of the freedom of the seas for peaceful trade" obviously in the eyes of England, which is at war, the only peaceful trade is that neutral trade which brings goods to England, but not that which carries or might carry goods to her opponents.

The German Government is convinced that the continual violation of neutral trade by England will everywhere place the British protest in its true light. The German Government is satisfied that for its part in taking the measures required by military exigency it has reduced as far as possible risk or injury to neutral shipping, and has strictly followed the rules hitherto applied by civilized nations to maritime warfare. On the other hand the infringement of vital neutral interests by England is capable of justification by no military exigency, since it has no connection with any military operations and is merely intended to strike at the economic system of the adversary by crippling legitimate neutral trade. This fundamental disregard of the very freedom of the seas which it has invoked deprives the British Government of any right to appear as the advocate of this freedom in the question of the laying of mines, which is far less injurious to neutrals.

BERLIN, November 7, 1914.

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File No. 862.801/1.

*Ambassador Gerard to the Secretary of State.*

No. 271.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

*Berlin, November 17, 1914.*

SIR: With reference to your cable No. 598<sup>1</sup> of November 9, 1914, and my reply No. 850<sup>2</sup> of November 16, I have the honor to transmit to you herewith a copy in

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<sup>1</sup>Not printed.

<sup>2</sup>Not printed. Gives substance of inclosure herewith.



translation of a communication received from the Imperial Foreign Office, dated November 14, 1914, relative to the regulations for navigation in the German bay of the North Sea.

Two copies of the publication, entitled "Nachrichten für Seefahrer," in which these regulations are printed, are likewise enclosed.

I have, etc.

JAMES W. GERARD.

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[Inclosure-Translation.]

FOREIGN OFFICE.

Nr. II U 4970-89541.

The Foreign Office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America in reply to the Note Verbale of 12th instant, F. O. No. 1078, that the following are the material regulations, governing navigation in the German Bay of the North Sea:

1. Steamships are permitted to make for the German coast, to enter or leave the mouths of rivers only from sunrise to sunset, and in clear weather. Ships attempting to point for the coast in the dark, in foggy or thick weather, run the risk of being shot at.

2. All commercial steamers bound for the Eider, Elbe, Weser and Jade must first point for the Listertief-Buoy; those bound for the Ems should make directly for its mouth.

3. In the interest of the safety of the ships, a pilot is obligatory from the Listertief-Buoy.

4. If ships cannot obtain pilots, on account of bad weather or for other reasons, they must either anchor or put out to sea again.

The approximate location of the Listertief-Buoy is 55° 3 3-4' north, 8° 17½' East.

For the rest reference made to issue No. 59 of the "Nachrichten für Seefahrer" of 4th instant, pages 1006 and 1007, two copies of which are attached.<sup>1</sup>

American shipping interests can obtain any further information from the "Nachrichten für Seefahrer" which is accessible to them.

*Berlin, November 14, 1914.*

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File No. 763.72/1268.

*The Secretary of State to Ambassador Gerard.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, December 8, 1914.

SIR: In further acknowledgement of your despatch No. 261, of November 13, 1914, transmitting a copy in translation of the reply of the German Government to the protest of the British Government against the laying of German mines, you are informed that a copy thereof

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<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

has been forwarded to the American Ambassador at London for transmission to the British Foreign Office without comment.

I am, etc.,

For the Secretary of State:

ROBERT LANSING.

File No. 841,801/33

*Consul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

[Extract.]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,

*London, December 11, 1914.*

SIR: I have the honor to enclose herewith a full copy of a circular which I have received from the Admiralty in regard to the navigation of the North Sea and English Channel.

I have, etc.,

ROBERT P. SKINNER

[Inclosure.]

#### NAVIGATION IN THE NORTH SEA AND ENGLISH CHANNEL.

It is requested that Shipowners on receiving these instructions will use their utmost endeavour to communicate them as confidentially as possible to the Masters of their vessels, impressing upon them the necessity for preventing the information from reaching the enemy. These instructions should not be allowed to come into the hands of any persons who are not directly affected by them.

The previous Notice on Navigation in the North Sea (dated the 14th October 1914) is cancelled.

#### A. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

1. Local Naval or Military Authorities may, at any time when they consider it necessary, close a port during certain hours without previous warning.

2. Attention is called to the notice on the inside cover of all Admiralty Sailing Directions and their Supplements, and to the following Admiralty Notices to Mariners of 1914:

No. 1 of 1st January.

No. 1528 of 14th September, Thames Approaches.

No. 1690 of 28th October, River Thames.

No. 1706 of 3rd November, Mined Areas.

No. 1727 of 7th November, River Mersey.

No. 1730 of 10th November, Orkney Islands.

No. 1752 of 16th November, East Coast Ports.

In the Notice to Mariners, No. 1752 of 16th November, the position of the Pilotage station of the River Humber to be established by the 27th November should read "7 miles E. S. E. (magnetic) from Spurn Point."

3. All lights may be extinguished and other aids to navigation removed or altered at any time without previous warning.

## B. MINES.

4. So far as is known at present there are, in addition to the minefields mentioned in Admiralty Notice to Mariners, No. 1752 of 1914, the following principal mined areas:

- (a) Off the Tyne
- (b) Off Flamborough Head
- (c) Off Southwold (southern limit  $51^{\circ} 54' N.$ )
- (d) British minefield within Lat.  $51^{\circ} 15' N$  and  $51^{\circ} 40' N$ . Long.  $1^{\circ} 35' E.$  and  $3^{\circ} E.$

## C. SPECIAL INFORMATION AS TO ENGLISH CHANNEL AND DOWNS.

5. On and after the 10th December lights, buoys and fog signals in the English Channel and the Downs eastward of a line joining Selsey Bill and Cape Barfleur and south of the parallel  $51^{\circ} 20' N.$ , will be liable to extinction or alteration without further notice.

Trinity House pilot stations will be established as follows by the 10th December:

St. Helens, Isle of Wight: Where ships proceeding up Channel can obtain pilots capable of piloting as far as Great Yarmouth.

Great Yarmouth: Where ships from the North Sea bound for the English Channel or intermediate ports can obtain pilots capable of piloting as far as the Isle of Wight.

Dover: Where ships from French Channel Ports, but no other, can obtain pilots for the North Sea.

The Sunk Light Vessel: Where ships crossing the North Sea between the parallels  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$  and  $51^{\circ} 54' N.$ , but no others, can obtain pilots for the English Channel.

Pilots also can be obtained at London for the Channel and the North Sea.

6. Both before and after the above date (10th December, 1914) all vessels entering the North Sea from the Channel, or vice versa, must pass through the Downs, where they will be given directions as to their route.

## D. PASSAGES—GENERAL.

7. On and after 10th December, 1914, vessels proceeding up or down Channel eastward of the Isle of Wight are very strongly advised to take pilots, as navigation will be exceedingly dangerous without their aid (see paragraph 5).

8. Vessels proceeding up or down the East Coast should keep within 3 miles of the coast when consistent with safe navigation. The only exception to this is when passing the mouth of the Tyne. Here all vessels should pass not less than 4 miles but not more than 8 miles from the coast between Sunderland and Blyth. Vessels bound to the Tyne must take a pilot off one of the above ports, as stated in Admiralty Notice to Mariners, No. 1752 of 1914.

## E. PARTICULAR PASSAGES.

(NOTE.—In each case return voyages should be made on same routes.)

9. East Coast Ports to French Ports: See paragraphs 5, 6, and 8.

10. East Coast Ports to Dutch Ports: Proceed as directed in paragraphs 5 and 8. Leave the English coast between the parallels of  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$  and  $51^{\circ} 45' N.$ ; proceed between these parallels as far as long.  $3^{\circ} E.$ , shape course thence to destination. Vessels using this route (which passes between the British and German minefields) must clearly understand that they do so *entirely* at their own risk.

11. East Coast Ports to Scandinavian or Danish Ports: Proceed as directed in paragraphs 5 and 8 as far as Farn Island; then steer for the vicinity of Lindesnaes, and thence to destination, keeping in territorial waters.

12. From Atlantic and Irish Ports or Ports on the South or West Coasts of Great Britain to Scandinavian or Danish Ports: Proceed via English Channel, being guided by paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11.

13. Sailing vessels bound to Scandinavian or Danish Ports: Pass to Westward of Ireland and of St. Kilda. Then make the Faroe Islands, and proceed from thence to destination, keeping 50 miles to the north of the Shetland Islands.

14. All vessels bound from East Coast Ports to West Coast Ports in the United Kingdom, and vice versa, must pass through the English Channel, and not round the north of Scotland.

ADMIRALTY WAR STAFF,

(TRADE DIVISION,)

30th November, 1914.

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File No. 763.72/1440.

*The German Ambassador to the Secretary of State.*

[Translation.]

J. No. A 869.]

GERMAN EMBASSY

Washington, February 6, 1915.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By direction of my Government I have the honor to communicate the following to Your Excellency:

It is known to the Imperial Government that Great Britain is on the point of shipping to France large forces of troops and quantities of implements of war. Germany will oppose this shipment with every war means at its command.

As peaceful craft may be, from being mistaken for vessels engaged in war operations, exposed to serious danger, the Imperial Government is placed under the necessity of warning of such danger vessels approaching the North and West Coasts of France. Merchant vessels repairing to the North Sea are advised to steer around Scotland.

Accept, etc.,

For the Imperial Ambassador:

HANIEL.



File No. 841.801/35.

*Consul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,  
*London, February 27, 1915.*

Mariners warned navigation entirely forbidden to all ships of area in Irish Channel bounded on northwest by line joining latitude 55 degrees 22½ minutes, longitude six degrees 17 minutes and latitude 55 degrees 31 minutes, longitude six degrees 02 minutes bounded on southeast by line joining latitude 55 degrees 10½ minutes longitude 5 degrees 24½ minutes and latitude 55 02 minutes longitude 5 degrees 40½ minutes bounded southwest by line from first described to fourth described point bounded northeast by line from second described to third described point. All traffic wishing to proceed through North Channel must pass southward of Rathlin Island between sunset and sunrise.

SKINNER.

File No. 763.72/1604.

*Ambassador Gerard to the Secretary of State.*

No. 615.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*Berlin, March 2, 1915.*

SIR: With reference to my telegram No. 1719<sup>1</sup> of the 1st instant, I have the honor to enclose to you herewith a copy in translation of a Note Verbale received from the Imperial Foreign Office, dated February 28, 1915, relative to the extent of the war area proclaimed by the German Admiralty. I have, etc.,

JAMES W. GERARD.

[Inclosure—Translation.]

FOREIGN OFFICE.  
Nr. III a 4333  
26052

NOTE VERBALE.

With reference to its Note Verbale of the 4th instant,<sup>2</sup> the Foreign Office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America, in order to avoid any doubts as to the northward extent of the war area defined in the proclamation of the Chief of the Admiralty Staff of the same day, that the waters surrounding the Orkneys and the Shetlands belong to the war area, but that navigation on both sides of the Faroe Isles is not endangered.

The Foreign Office begs the Embassy of the United States of America to be good enough to inform its Government of the above by cable, and to notify the Governments of Great Britain, Japan and Servia accordingly.

*Berlin, February 28, 1915.*

To the EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed. Gives substance of inclosure herewith.

<sup>2</sup> See EUROPEAN WAR No. 1, pp. 52 and 53.

File No. 763.72/1549.

*Consul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

*London, March 6, 1915.*

Admiralty renews urgent warning to vessels to take London Trinity house pilot when navigating between Great Yarmouth and English Channel. While danger areas are publicly defined, Admiralty add, "it must not be supposed that navigation is necessarily safe in any part of the southern waters of North Sea."

SKINNER

File No. 841.801/40.

*Counsul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,

*London, May 17, 1915.*

Admiralty cancels notice on navigation North Sea dated November thirtieth, nineteen fourteen. Masters are strongly urged to obtain latest notices before sailing from British ports. Lights may be extinguished and other changes made without previous warning. In addition to mine fields in Firth of Forth, Moray Firth and Scapa Flow, following are principal mined areas as far as known: (A) off Tyne; (B) off Flamborough Head; (C) off Southwold, southern limit fifty one degrees fifty-four minutes N.D.(?); British mine field between latitude fifty-one degrees fifteen minutes N.; and latitude fifty-one degrees forty minutes N.; and between longitude one degree thirty-four minutes E., and longitude three degrees E. All vessels entering North Sea from English Channel must pass between two light vessels off Folkestone, proceed to Downs, keeping inshore imaginary line joining southernmost of the two light vessels to the South Goodwin light vessel, further instructions in Downs. Vessels proceeding up or down east coast should keep within three miles of coast when consistent with safe navigation. Vessels from east coast ports to Channel and French ports should proceed to Downs, keeping within three miles of coast and follow Admiralty notice to mariners 239, at Downs further instructions will be obtained. Vessels from east coast ports to Dutch ports, should keep within three miles of coast, leaving English coast between the parallels fifty-one degrees forty minutes north, and fifty-one degrees fifty four minutes north, proceeding between these parallels as far as longitude three degrees east, shaping course thence to destination; this route passes between British and German mine fields and vessels proceed at their own risk. Vessels from east coast to Scandinavian ports should keep within three miles of coast, and proceed according to Admiralty notice 239, as far as Farne Island, then steer for Lindesnaes and thence to destination, keeping in territorial waters.

Route from St. Abbs Head to Stavanger, may be used as alternative.

British and allied vessels wishing to use northabout route should apply to Customs, and neutral vessels must apply for permission through their foreign representatives, and failing such permission proceed southabout.

Sailing vessels from Atlantic to Scandinavian ports pass westward of Ireland and St. Kilda thence Faroe Islands to destination, passing northward by fifty miles of Shetland Islands.

SKINNER.

File No. 841.801/45.

*Consul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,  
London, May 19, 1915.

SIR: Referring to my telegram of May 17, setting forth briefly the terms of a notice on navigation in the North Sea and English Channel received from the Trade Division of the Admiralty on that date, I have the honor to enclose herewith, in duplicate, a full copy of the circular, together with the Admiralty Notice to Mariners referred to in the said circular.

I have, etc.,

ROBERT P. SKINNER.

[Inclosure.]

NAVIGATION IN THE NORTH SEA AND BRITISH HOME  
WATERS.

The previous Notice on Navigation in the North Sea and English Channel (dated 30th November 1914) is cancelled.

A.—GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

1. Local Naval or Military Authorities may, at any time when they consider it necessary, close a port during certain hours without previous warning.

2. Before leaving ports in the United Kingdom Masters of Vessels should be careful to obtain the latest Admiralty Notices to Mariners. Attention is called to the Notice on the inside cover of all Admiralty Sailing Directions and their Supplements, and to the following Admiralty Notices to Mariners and any subsequent ones that may be issued:

No. 1738 of 13th November 1914. River Medway.

No. 1812 of 10th December 1914. Bristol Channel.

No. 45 of 15th January 1915. Yarmouth Roads.

No. 137 of 22nd February 1915. Irish Channel.  
North Channel.

No. 165 of 8th March 1915. River Humber Pilotage.

No. 228 of 26th March 1915. Dover Strait. Light  
Vessels established.

No. 239 of 27th March 1915. North Sea, River Thames,  
and English Channel.

No. 258 of 3rd April 1915. Portland Harbour.

No. 274 of 7th April 1915. Caution when approaching British Ports.

No. 391 of 5th May 1915. Firth of Forth, Moray Firth, Scapa Flow.

No. 408 of 8th May 1915. River Tyne Boom Defence. Entrance Signals and Traffic Regulations.

3. Care must be taken at all times to ensure Masters being in possession of the latest Notices to Mariners.

4. Any lights may be extinguished and other aids to navigation removed or altered at any time without previous warning. (Admiralty Notice to Mariners No. 1627 of 9th October 1914.)

#### B.—MINES.

5. So far as is known at present there are, in addition to the mine-fields mentioned in Admiralty Notice to Mariners, No. 391 of 5th May 1915, the following principal mined areas:—

(a) Off the Tyne.

(b) Off Flamborough Head.

(c) Off Southwold (Southern limit  $50^{\circ} 54' N.$ ).

(d) British mine-field between Lat.  $51^{\circ} 15' N.$  and Lat.  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$ , and between Long.  $1^{\circ} 35' E.$  and Long.  $3^{\circ} E.$

#### C.—PASSAGES.—GENERAL.

6. All vessels entering the North Sea from the English Channel must pass between the two Light vessels off Folkestone (see Admiralty Notice to Mariners No. 228 of 1915), and proceed to the Downs, keeping inshore of an imaginary line joining the Southernmost of the two Light vessels to the South Goodwin Light-vessel. Further instructions as to routes can be obtained in the Downs.

7. Vessels proceeding up or down the East Coast should keep within 3 miles of the coast when consistent with safe navigation.

#### D.—PARTICULAR PASSAGES.

(NOTE.—In each case the return voyage should be made on the same route.)

8. *East Coast Ports to Channel and French Ports.*—Proceed to the Downs following the directions in paragraph 7 and Admiralty Notice to Mariners, No. 239 of 1915. At the Downs further instructions will be obtained.

9. *East Coast Ports to Dutch Ports.*—Proceed as directed in paragraph 7 and Admiralty Notice to Mariners No. 239 of 1915. Leave the English coast between the parallels  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$  and  $51^{\circ} 54' N.$ ; proceed between these parallels as far as Longitude  $3^{\circ} E.$ ; shape course thence to destination. Vessels using this route (which passes between the British and German mine-fields) must clearly understand that they do so entirely at their own risk.

10. *East Coast Ports to Scandinavian Ports.*—Proceed as directed in paragraph 7 and Admiralty Notice to Mariners No. 239 of 1915, as far as Farn Island; then steer for Lindesnaes and thence to destination, keeping in territorial waters. The route from St. Abbs Head to Stavanger may be used as an alternative to the above route.

11. British and Allied vessels wishing to use the North about route should apply to the Customs for directions.

Neutral vessels wishing to use the North-about route should be informed that application for permission to do so must be obtained through their Diplomatic representatives, and that, failing such permission, they must proceed South-about.

In no circumstances are vessels allowed to pass through the Minches or through the Pentland Firth.

12. *Sailing Vessels from Atlantic to Scandinavian Ports.*—Pass to Westward of Ireland and St. Kilda. Then make the Faroe Islands, and proceed thence to destination, passing to the Northward of the Shetland Islands, and keeping 50 miles from them.

ADMIRALTY WAR STAFF

(TRADE DIVISION)

15th May 1915

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File No. 841.801/40.

*The Secretary of State to Ambassador W. H. Page.*

[Telegram.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Washington, May 20, 1915.

Admiralty announcement canceling notice on Navigation North Sea of November 30, 1914, cabled by Skinner May 17th states that British and allied vessels wishing to use northabout route should apply to Customs, and neutral vessels must apply for permission, through their foreign representatives, and failing such permission proceed southabout.

Department does not fully understand the intention and effect underlying such regulations, and shall be glad to have an immediate report on the subject from you.

BRYAN.

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File No. 841.801/46.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

London, June 5, 1915.

Following reply received today from Foreign Office: "I did not fail to refer to the proper department of His Majesty's Government the notes which Your Excellency was good enough to address to me on the 22nd and 29th ultimo enquiring as to the Admiralty announcement cancelling the notice on navigation in the North Sea of November 30th, 1914.

"I have the honour to state in reply that the notice on navigation in the North Sea dated 15th May introduced no new regulations with regard to the northabout route. The notice was merely intended to summarise existing practice which has been evolved with the object of ensuring that trade passing northabout shall be limited in amount and reputable in character.

"Many applications for vessels to use the northabout route have been received through the Legations of the

Scandinavian Powers in London and permission has been granted.

"I have the honour to add that any similar applications which may be made on behalf of United States vessels would of course receive equal treatment."

PAGE.

File No. 841.801/46.

*The Secretary of State ad interim to Ambassador  
W. H. Page.*

[Telegram—Paraphrase.]

No. 1721.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, June 16, 1915.

Mr. Lansing states that the inquiry in Department's May 20th is not fully answered in the note of June 5th from the British Foreign Office. The Department is at a loss to understand the British Government's object in regulating foreign vessels' courses on the high seas as for example in paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 of the general instructions of the fifteenth of May enclosed in despatch of May 19 from Consul General appears to be the case.

Mr. Page is directed to press the British Foreign Office for a further explanation.

File No. 841.801/47.

*Consul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,  
London, June 23, 1915.

Hydrographic Department, Admiralty issue notice 525, warning mariners danger passing through Pas de Calais between Le Colbart (the ridge) and French coast. Vessels from North must wait off Calais for pilot or instructions, vessels from South must wait off Boulogne. Vessels not conforming above do so at their own peril.

SKINNER.

File No. 841.801/49.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

No. 2517.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
London, July 23, 1915.

Your 1721, June 16. Following note received from Foreign Office, dated July 22:

"I did not fail to refer to the proper Department of his majesty's government the note which your excellency was so good as to address to me on the 18th ultimo regarding the Admiralty announcement cancelling the notice on navigation in the North Sea on the 30th November 1914.

"I have now the honour to inform your excellency that the action of His Majesty's Government in indicating routes to be followed by neutral merchant vessels in the vicinity of the British Isles and in the North Sea is based upon the fact that merchant vessels passing through the

North Sea run very grave risk unless they act in strict accordance with the directions of the Admiralty. Before issuing such special directions to a neutral vessel the Admiralty desires to be assured that the vessel's voyage is undertaken with the knowledge and consent of the government of the country whose flag she flies, and for this reason it is necessary that the application by a neutral vessel for advice as to special routes should be supported by the diplomatic representative of the government in question.

"If such support to the application is not given neutral vessels will not receive the special instructions as to the north aboutroute and will be advised to go southabout where they can be supplied with the latest warnings and obtain the services of pilots where necessary."

PAGE.

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File No. 841.801/49.

*The Secretary of State to Ambassador W. H. Page.*

[Telegram.]

No. 1908.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, July 26, 1915.

Your 2517, July 23. Department understands requirement in Admiralty Notice May 15 that neutral vessels bound to North Sea by northabout route must obtain from Admiralty special directions through their diplomatic representatives applies only to vessels sailing from British ports and not to vessels sailing direct from American or other neutral ports. Ascertain and report whether this understanding is correct. Have any American owned or chartered vessels applied for such directions through Embassy or been interfered with for failure to apply. Also notify Consul-General.

LANSING.

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File No. 841.801/51.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
London, August 17, 1915.

I am in receipt of a note from Sir Edward Grey in reply to my representations based on the Department's instructions which reads as follows:

"I have the honor to inform Your Excellency in reply that in principle His Majesty's Government would desire that neutral vessels passing northabout from one neutral port to another should sail with the knowledge and consent of the Government of the country whose flag they fly and should follow a track similar as far as possible to that used by vessels sailing from British ports. The difficulty of ensuring this is however so considerable and the responsibility of His Majesty's Government in the matter is so slight that no endeavor is being made in practice to secure any such limitation of sailings."

PAGE.



File No. 841.801/53.

*Consul General Skinner to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,  
*London, September 3, 1915.*

Admiralty Order 764. Traffic in Straits Dover between Varne Shoal and Folkestone must pass between light vessels moored—first  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles 140 degrees south 26 degrees east magnitude (?) from Folkestone pierhead latitude 51 degrees 02 minutes 40 seconds north longitude 1 degree 14 minutes 10 seconds east; second 5 cables 150 degrees south 16 degrees east magnitude (?) from first. Ships disregarding this warning do so at own peril.

SKINNER.

File No. 841.801/72.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*London, May 2, 1916.*

Following circular note received to-day from Foreign Office, dated May first, 1916.

"The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the United States Ambassador and has the honour to acquaint him for the information of the United States Government that it has been found necessary to extend the eastern limit of the danger area of the British minefield off the Belgian coast, notified on the twenty-second October, 1914, so as to include the waters south of latitude fifty-one degrees, forty minutes north, as far as the Meridian of three degrees, twenty minutes east, instead of three degrees east as previously notified.

Sir E. Grey would remind Dr. Page that the danger area as notified on the second October, 1914, comprised that situated between latitude fifty-one degrees, fifteen minutes and fifty-one degrees, forty minutes north, and longitude one degree, thirty-five minutes east, and three degrees east."

PAGE.

File No. 841.801/74.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
*London, May 29, 1916.*

Respecting mine field off Belgian coast.

Foreign Office inform me under date May twenty-seventh that the Eastern limit of the danger area of the British mine field off the Belgian coast should be defined as the meridian of three degrees eighteen minutes east instead of three degrees twenty minutes east as previously notified in error.

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File No. 841.801/78.

*The British Ambassador to the Secretary of State.*

No. 193.]

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
Washington, July 1, 1916.

SIR: I have the honour, in accordance with instructions received from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to transmit to you herewith copy of an Admiralty Notice to Mariners, No. 618 of 1916, relative to the necessity for the exercise of caution in navigating on account of certain mined areas in the North Sea.

I am instructed to invite the attention of the United States Government to the extension of the danger zone as indicated at (B) in the enclosed notice.

I have, etc.,

(For the Ambassador)  
COLVILLE BARCLAY.

[Inclosure.]

ADMIRALTY NOTICE TO MARINERS.

No. 618 of the year 1916.

NORTH SEA

Caution with regard to Mined Areas.

*Former notice.*—No. 541 of 1916; hereby cancelled.

*Caution.*—Mariners are warned that a system of mine-fields has been established by H. M. Government upon a considerable scale. All vessels are strongly advised to obtain a London Trinity House pilot when navigating between Great Yarmouth and the English Channel.

It is dangerous for vessels to enter the following areas.—

- (a) The area enclosed between the parallels of latitude  $51^{\circ} 15' N.$  and  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$ , and the meridians of longitude  $1^{\circ} 35' E.$  and  $3^{\circ} 18' E.$
- (b) The area enclosed between the parallels of latitude  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$  and  $52^{\circ} 00' N.$ , and the meridians of longitude  $1^{\circ} 55' E.$  and  $2^{\circ} 32' E.$

*Remarks.*—Although these limits are assigned to the danger areas, it must not be supposed that navigation is necessarily safe in any portion of the southern waters of the North Sea.

*Note.*—This Notice is a repetition of Notice No. 541, of 1916, with addition of the danger area specified in paragraph (b).

(Notice No. 618 of 1916.)

*Authority.*—The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.  
(H. 3512/16.)

By Command of their Lordships,

J. F. PARRY,  
Hydrographer.

HYDROGRAPHIC DEPARTMENT, ADMIRALTY,  
London, 9th June 1916.

File No. 841.801/80.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*London, January 25, 1917.*

Following notice dated January twenty-fourth received from Foreign Office with request that it be brought immediately to attention of United States Government.

"In view of the unrestricted warfare carried on by Germany at sea by means of mines and submarines not only against the Allied Powers but also against neutral shipping and the fact that merchant ships are constantly sunk without regard to the ultimate safety of their crews, His Majesty's Government give notice that on and after the seventh proximo the undermentioned area in the North Sea will be rendered dangerous to all shipping by operations against the enemy and it should therefore be avoided.

"Area comprising all the waters except Netherland and Danish territorial waters lying to the southward and eastward of a line commencing four miles from the coast of Jutland in latitude 56 degrees north, longitude eight degrees east from Greenwich and passing through the following positions: Latitude fifty-six degrees north, longitude six degrees east, latitude fifty-four degrees forty-five minutes east (?) thence to a position in latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-seven minutes north, longitude five degrees east, seven miles off the coast of the Netherlands.

"To meet the needs of the Netherland coastal traffic which cannot strictly confine itself to territorial waters owing to navigational difficulties a safe passage will be left to the southward of a line joining the following points: Latitude fifty-three degrees twenty-seven minutes north, longitude five degrees east, latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-one and half minutes north, longitude five degrees thirty minutes east, latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-four minutes north, longitude six degrees east, latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-nine minutes north, longitude six degrees twenty-three minutes east."

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File No. 841.801/83.

*Ambassador Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*London, February 15, 1917.*

Following revised notice dated February thirteenth received from Foreign Office respecting dangerous area in North Sea which is intended to replace notice quoted my telegram 5544, January twenty-fifth, 1917:

"North Sea. Caution with regard to dangerous area. Caution. In view of the unrestricted warfare carried on by Germany at sea by means of mines and submarines not only against the Allied Powers but also against neutral shipping and the fact that merchant ships are constantly sunk without regard to the ultimate safety of their crews, His Majesty's Government give notice that on and after the seventh February, 1917, the undermentioned area in the North Sea will be rendered dangerous to all shipping by operations against the enemy and it should therefore be avoided.

"Dangerous Area. The area comprising all the waters except Netherland and Danish territorial waters lying to the southward and eastward of a line commencing four miles from the coast of Jutland in latitude fifty-six degrees north longitude eight degrees east and passing through the following positions: Latitude fifty-six degrees north longitude six degrees east and latitude fifty-four degrees forty-five minutes north longitude four degrees thirty minutes east thence to a position in latitude fifty-three degrees twenty-seven minutes north longitude five degrees east seven miles from the coast of The Netherlands.

"To meet the needs of the coastal traffic which can not strictly confine itself to territorial waters owing to navigational difficulties, it will be safe to navigate between the coast of Jutland and a line passing through the following positions: Latitude fifty-six degrees north longitude eight degrees east latitude fifty-five degrees forty minutes north longitude eight degrees east latitude fifty-five degrees thirty-six minutes north longitude seven degrees fifteen minutes east latitude fifty-five degrees thirty-two minutes north longitude seven degrees fifteen minutes east latitude fifty-five degrees twenty-two minutes north longitude seven degrees forty-five minutes east latitude fifty-five degrees nineteen minutes north longitude eight degrees four minutes east latitude fifty-five degrees twenty-two minutes north longitude eight degrees nineteen minutes east which is three miles from the coast of Fano Island.

"Also a safe passage will be left along the Netherland coast southward of a line joining the following positions: Latitude fifty-three degrees twenty-seven minutes north longitude five degrees east latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-one and half minutes north longitude five degrees thirty minutes east latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-four minutes north longitude six degrees east latitude fifty-three degrees thirty-nine minutes north longitude six degrees twenty-three minutes east."

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File No. 763.72/3359a.

*The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador.*

No. 1485.]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, February 19, 1917.

EXCELLENCY: From time to time during the present war, as Your Excellency is aware, the Government of His Britannic Majesty have given notice of certain delimited areas of the high seas, designated as "military areas" or "danger areas," within which merchant shipping of all kinds, fishing craft, and all other vessels, were warned that they would be subject to the gravest dangers from mines laid by His Majesty's Government, and from hostile operations, and that they would enter such waters at their peril. This matter was referred to in the Department's memorandum of August 13, 1914, and has been the subject of subsequent correspondence between the American Ambassador at London and the British Foreign Office.

As the question of appropriating certain portions of the high seas for military operations, to the exclusion of the use of the hostile area as a common highway of commerce, has not become a settled principle of international law assented to by the family of nations, it will

be recognized that the Government of the United States must, and hereby does, for the protection of American interests, reserve generally all of its rights in the premises, including the right not only to question the validity of these measures, but to present demands and claims in relation to any American interests which may be unlawfully affected, directly or indirectly, by virtue of the enforcement of these measures.

Accept, etc.,

ROBERT LANSING.

File No. 841.801/88.

*Ambassador W. H. Page to the Secretary of State.*

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
*London, March 23, 1917.*

My telegram 5701, February fifteenth.

Foreign office in note dated March twenty-first state:

"As from the first April, 1917, the dangerous area will comprise all the waters except Danish and Netherlands territorial waters lying to the southward and eastward of a line commencing three miles from the coast of Jutland on the parallel of latitude fifty-six degrees north and passing through the following positions:

"One. Latitude fifty-six degrees north, longitude six degrees east.

"Two. Latitude fifty-four degrees forty-five minutes north, longitude four degrees thirty minutes east.

"Three. Latitude fifty-three degrees twenty-three minutes north, longitude five degrees one minute east.

"Four. Latitude fifty-three degrees twenty-five minutes north, longitude five degrees five and half minutes east, and thence to the eastward following the limit of Netherlands territorial waters."

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